

The Luke Air Force Base Thunderbolt

“We train the world’s greatest fighter pilots and combat ready Airmen”

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INSIDE

Variety of planes create Haboob Havoc

STORIES

- Shooting competition, 3
- Recruitment incentives, 9
- Chaplain’s Corner, 10
- Luke, RSAF celebrate, 10

FEATURE



Airman 1st Class Katelynn Jackson

FUEL SPILL EXERCISE

See Pages 6 and 7



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Mason Hargrove

Community partners watch an A-10 Thunderbolt II from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base perform a strafing run during Haboob Havoc, a total force competition that allow pilots from various bases to demonstrate their skills across a diverse range of aircraft, including F-35 Lightning IIs, F-16 Fighting Falcons, and A-10 Thunderbolt IIs.

Thunderbolt

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By Airman 1st Class
MASON HARGROVE

56th Fighter Wing

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. — The 56th Fighter Wing hosted the 10th annual fighter pilot competition Haboob Havoc, April 26th to 28th, 2023, at Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona.

Haboob Havoc is a total force competition that provides an opportunity for pilots from various bases to demonstrate their skills across a diverse range of aircraft while also testing their abilities in different mission sets such as simulated dogfighting, strafing, and gun runs.

The competition showcased a diverse range of aircraft. 56th Fighter Wing participation included F-35 Lightning IIs from the 61st Fighter Squadron, 62nd FS, 63rd FS, and 308th FS along with F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 309th FS.

A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 47th FS and 354th FS from Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, and F-16 aircraft assigned to the 152nd FS at Morris Air National Guard Base, Tucson, Arizona, also competed.

In addition, international partners currently training at Luke AFB were in-



A U.S. Air Force F-35 Lightning II assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing performs a strafing run during Haboob Havoc, April 26, 2023, over Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona. Haboob Havoc is a total force competition that provides a way for pilots from various bases to demonstrate their skills across a diverse range of aircraft, including F-35 Lightning IIs, F-16 Fighting Falcons, and A-10 Thunderbolt IIs.



Community partners watch an F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 309th Fighter Squadron perform a strafing run during Haboob Havoc, April 26, 2023, at Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona.

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Fight for a better life

By Senior Airman
DOMINIC TYLER

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LUKEAIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. — “When I first arrived in America I could not sleep for weeks. There were no bombs, no gunshots or sirens. It was just so quiet.”

U.S. Air Force Capt. Ahmed Alghadhban was born and raised in a middle-class family in Karbala, Iraq, about 60 miles south of Baghdad.

“My father owned land and a farm, so my brother and I had basically everything we needed,” he said. “But everything changed for me in March 2003, when I was 16 years old.”

On March 19, 2003, the U.S. and

“I was held hostage in a small room with 35 other men. This time, I thought they were going to kill us all. I did not think I would make it out alive,”

U.S. Air Force Capt. Ahmed
Alghadhban

coalition forces invaded Iraq following intelligence that the country and its dictator, Saddam Hussein, were developing weapons of mass destruction. This invasion marked the first day of the Iraq war.

“My alarm clock for the morning was bombs dropping on military bases outside Karbala,” he said. “My father said we needed to leave, but there was nowhere to go. Baghdad was under massive attack. We were stuck in Karbala.”

Weeks after the first day of the invasion, Baghdad, the capital city, was captured on April 9 and the terrorist regime led by Hussein fell.

This development ignited a sudden aggravation of an ongoing civil war between Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims causing an even bigger problem for Ahmed’s family.

“Karbala is known as the holy city of Shi’ite Muslims. My family migrated here about 200 years ago as Sunni,” he said. “So, we have always been out of place here as Sunnis, but we got along fine mostly. But after

the Saddam regime fell, so did the Iraq police force. No police, or Iraqi Army, no security forces; and that is when the cleansing of Sunnis began.”

Ahmed and his family were forced to leave their home; all their possessions and land were seized by the Iraqi government. Fortunately, the family had enough money to get his parents out of the country and move his brother to United Arab Emirates after graduating.

Ahmed, on the other hand, was only 16. He could not work and needed to finish school. From 2003-2004 he stayed with whoever could take him in for only a couple months at a time.

“This continued until I was accepted into a college of engineering in Baghdad. I moved there and got a job at the peak of the civil war.”

Ahmed moved to an area under control of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian terrorist group leader also known as the founder of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

“This was the only place I could live as Sunni,” he said. “I lived under al-Qaeda for four years because the rest of the area was controlled by Iranian militia where I would be killed because of my Sunni name.”

Over the years, Ahmed was arrested multiple times and kidnapped by the Iranian militia for his family name.

Despite the ongoing war in Iraq, Ahmed managed to graduate from college in 2008 and obtained a job as an electrical engineer at a power station in Baghdad.

In 2010, Ahmed saw an advertisement sponsored by the U.S. government about the Fulbright program. The U.S. Embassy was offering grants for qualified Iraqi students to study at the graduate level in the United States. Seven of the 1,200 applicants would be chosen.

“At the time, I had zero faith I would get selected,” he said. “I was living essentially in a refugee camp because I couldn’t afford anywhere else. I was sending most of my money to my parents in Syria. I worked 12-hour shifts and had to share my bed with another refugee while I was away. I did not think the odds were in my favor.”



Courtesy photo
U.S. Air Force Capt. Ahmed Alghadhban

That same year, he was arrested once again for his family name, but this time was different than the rest.

“I was held hostage in a small room with 35 other men,” he said. “This time, I thought they were going to kill us all. I did not think I would make it out alive. Luckily my uncle had some money to get me out.”

Shortly after his final release from jail, Ahmed was notified that he had been accepted for the Fulbright program. After years of dedication to his schooling, he was finally heading to America.

“I had two choices,” he said. “One, surrender to the fate many Iraqi men my age fall into; joining a terrorist organization or militia because there is no hope for a better life. Or two, just keep fighting. I chose the latter. It was a simple decision to me.”

Ahmed explains that his dedication to school came from the values embedded in him by his parents.

“I worked hard, but I was also very lucky. I had parents that taught me the value of books and education,” he said. “My mother was not allowed to go to school when she was younger, so she did everything in her power to give me that opportunity. My father always pushed my brother and I to read books and think for ourselves. My parents have been behind me every step of the way.”

After being selected to study in the U.S., Ahmed’s first stop was the University of South Alabama in Mobile, where he earned a Master’s in electri-

See FIGHT, Page 4

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56th FSF holds shooting competition



An Airman assigned to the 56th Security Forces Squadron selects a 9mm bullet to load into a magazine, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Eric Endert, 944th Security Forces Squadron security forces member, scores a target, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. As one of Luke AFB's events for National Police Week the 56th SFS and their reserve counterpart the 944th SFS participated in a shooting competition.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero
U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Klein, 56th Security Forces Squadron unit trainer, takes aim with a Baretta M9 handgun, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The 56th SFS held a shooting competition part of the squadron's events for National Police Week. The M9 is designed for use by the armed forces and law enforcement and has been used by the U.S. military for over 30 years.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ronald Hopper, 56th Security Forces law enforcement patrolman, loads a magazine. The 56th SFS held a shooting competition as part of the squadron's events for National Police Week.



A member of the 56th Security Forces Squadron fires a Baretta M9 handgun, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The M9 is designed for use by the armed forces and law enforcement and has been used by the U.S. military for over 30 years.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Klein, 56th Security Forces Squadron unit trainer, checks his target's score, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The 56th SFS held a shooting competition as one of the squadron's events for National Police Week.



LEFT: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexander Klein, 56th Security Forces Squadron unit trainer, fires a Baretta M9 handgun, May 17, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.

HABOOB (from Page 1)

volved, including Norway, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands.

"This event showcases the incredible skills and capabilities of our fighter pilots and highlights the importance of supporting their training and combat readiness," said Charles Buchanan, 56th Range Management Office director. "We are honored to contribute to the ongoing success of our pilots."

The competition takes place at the 1.7-million-acre Barry M. Goldwater Range which provides sufficient airspace for the pilots to compete against each other in basic fighter maneuvers and air-to-surface attacks.

"Haboob Havoc not only allows us as pilots to

showcase the capabilities of these aircraft but also provides an opportunity for us to learn from each other and improve our readiness for any mission," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Kirk, 56th Operations Support Squadron chief of weapons plans. "By participating in friendly competition, it allows us as pilots to improve our readiness for real-world scenarios."

Haboob Havoc is an annual training event that allows pilots to sharpen their skills alongside many of their fellow Airmen, as well as strengthen interoperability with foreign nations. This aids in maintaining the overall effectiveness of our military forces in combat situations.

Events like Haboob Havoc continue to empower Airmen at Luke to uphold the mission of training the world's greatest fighter pilots.

FIGHT (from Page 2)

cal engineering and a doctorate in biomedical science.

Though he was glad to finally be out of his situation in Iraq, he had trouble adjusting to the culture upon arrival.

"The music was different. The food was different. There's running water and lights at all hours of the day. And of course, the silence at night was so strange to me. After a month or so, I was able to sleep without worry, knowing I was safe."

He didn't know anyone in America until he met his first roommate Hunter Garcia.

"When I saw him at the gym for the first time, I could tell he wasn't familiar with the place," said Hunter. "I grew up in a melting pot of diverse cultures in California. When I found out Ahmed was an Iraqi refugee and had no family here in the U.S., I made sure to invite him to vacations and holidays with my family. Our friendship grew from there and my family treats him as one of our own."

Though his roommate was polite enough, Ahmed's life in Iraq had taught him to stay guarded around outsiders.

"I'll admit I was suspicious of him in the beginning," Ahmed

said. "Where I am from, you have to be wary of any new person who is not a part of your group because they could be out to get you. But he kept asking me to hang out and made me a part of his life and treated me like family."

To this day, Ahmed visits Hunter and his family every year for major holidays and camping trips. Ahmed was eventually able to make friends, travel the U.S. and adjust to American culture.

After graduation, he worked as an application scientist for three years before joining the U.S. Air Force in 2020, serving as a bioenvironmental engineer for the 56th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB, Arizona.

Alghadhbhan's commitment to higher education and resiliency are in accordance with the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force. His story illustrates the importance of a diverse and inclusive total force.

"Coming to America saved my life," he said. "I felt I was obligated to join the U.S. military and serve the country that was so generous to me. I am so grateful, and I hope those who read my story will see that there is always hope for a better life as long as you are willing to sacrifice for it."



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Mason Hargrove

A Royal Danish Air Force F-35 Lightning II assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing performs a strafing run over Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona, April 26, 2023. Haboob Havoc showcases the skills and capabilities of fighter pilots across various bases and highlights the importance of supporting their training and combat readiness.



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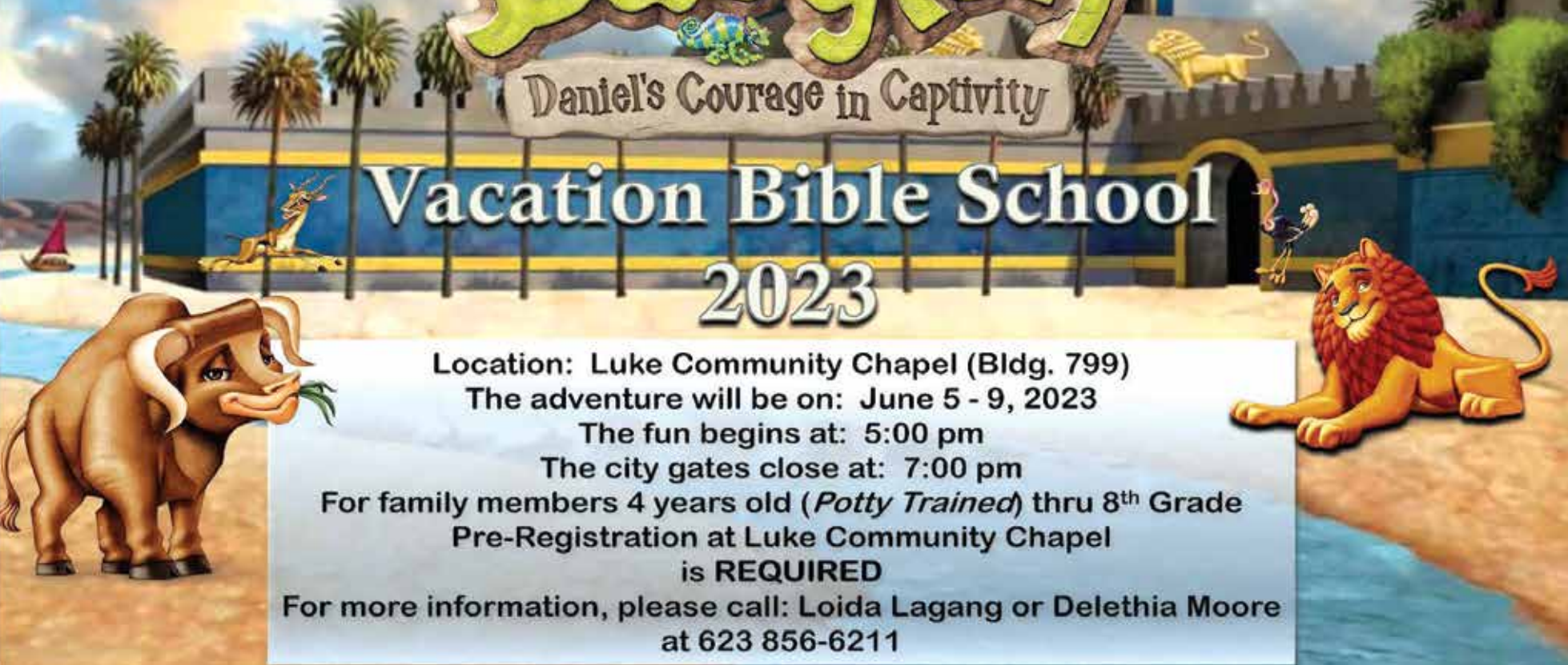
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2023

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IG CONDUCTS FUEL S



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Katelynn Jackson

Shawn Welborn, 56th Civil Engineer Squadron assistant fire chief, releases water to simulate jet fuel spillage in a Defense Logistics Agency Energy fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The exercise was conducted to test response operations of base recovery agencies in the event of a hazardous fuel spill emergency to ensure installation safety and minimal environmental impact.



Members of the 56th Fighter Wing base response agencies participate in a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. Exercises like these, involving multiple emergency response agencies working together, prepare installations for catastrophic events that help reduce negative impacts to the environment, mission and the community.



SPILL EXERCISE

**By Airman 1st Class
KATELYNN JACKSON**

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The 56th Fighter Wing Inspector General hosted a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.

The IG team conducted the test to ensure installation safety and minimal environmental impact in the event of a hazardous fuel spill emergency with the help of base recovery agencies.

"We have to be cognizant when responding to these emergencies," said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Roscoe Mayes, 56th Fighter Wing Inspector General lead instructor in-charge of inspections. "In exercises you can make mistakes and there is no harm, no foul. We don't want Airmen to have to deal with something like this and be unprepared."

The emergency scenario involved a contractor's truck backing up into a storage unit and spilling 2,000 gallons of simulated fuel.

The DLA conducts fuel spill exercises annually and coordinates with appropriate companies to meet the requirements put in place by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

"All participating players are subject matter experts in their specific field," said Tracey Taylor, project coordinator for the DLA exercise. "When you bring those subject matter experts together, you create a cohesive team that knows how to respond to every aspect of the emergency; where the spill is going to go, what it's going to impact, clean-up and removal, etc."

Members of the Luke AFB Fire Department, 56th Security Forces Squadron, 56th Wing Safety office, 56th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron, bioenvironmental department, 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron and their civilian contractor counterparts all participated in the isolation, mitigation, and containment of the simulated fuel spill.

"The fire department's main concern is to maintain the fuel and keep it from causing further damage to the environment or people," said David Givens, 56th CES assistant

fire chief of operations. "Once we mitigate it, we call in experts from different fields like bioenvironmental and Wing Safety to brief them on the situation for them to take over."

The 56th SFS is also one of the key players in the initial response team.

"Our role as security forces for this type of incident is to assist the incident commander," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Davidson Clark, 56th SFS flight sergeant. "We set up all traffic control points to stop all vehicle traffic from heading into the incident itself, assist with the evacuation of buildings that are inside the perimeter and notify individuals in the surrounding area to shelter in place."

Catastrophic events cannot be predicted, but installations can be prepared. Training exercises like this help reduce negative im-

pacts to the environment, the mission, and the community.

The IG office is an independent agency that provides training and education for all base personnel and runs the exercise evaluation team for the 56th FW, ensuring that the integrity of base procedural systems is maintained.

"The IG team organized subject matter experts in the various participating shops, squadrons and groups to help articulate what we could and couldn't do for this exercise," said Mayes. "I worked and created the master scenario events list, or mission objectives for this exercise making sure that everyone stays in the sequence of events."

At the end of the exercise, all participants from each unit discussed the lessons they learned that could be implemented in the event of a real-world disaster.

Exercises involving multiple emergency response agencies working together not only ensures installation safety, but bolsters unit cohesion creating a more mission-ready Air Force.



Members of the Luke Air Force Base Fire Department participate in a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke AFB, Arizona.



Members of the 56th Fighter Wing base response agencies participate in a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



Members of the 56th Fighter Wing base response agencies participate in a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The exercise was coordinated by the 56th Fighter Wing Inspector General team to test the response operations of base recovery agencies in the event of a hazardous fuel spill emergency to ensure installation safety and minimal environmental impact.



Members of the Luke Air Force Base Fire Department establish a field command center in a Defense Logistics Agency fuel spill exercise May 4, 2023, at Luke AFB, Arizona. The exercise was conducted to test the response operations of base recovery agencies in the event of a hazardous fuel spill emergency to ensure installation safety and minimal environmental impact.



LEFT: Tracy Taylor, project coordinator for the Defense Logistics Agency exercise, provides instruction at a fuel spill prevention and response training exercise May 3, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The instruction reviewed environmental protection mandates, spill mitigation and emergency response techniques for service members and contractors who frequently handle hazardous materials on the installation.

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Public Affairs

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Two new programs, Stellar Talent Acquisition Recruiting Referral and Stripes for Referrals, aim to incentivize all Airmen and Guardians to inspire the next generation to serve in the Air Force and Space Force.

STARR authorizes enlisted service members up to senior master sergeant and officers up to lieutenant colonel to receive up to two Air and Space Achievement Medals for referring three enlisted accessions applicants who depart for basic military training.

Additionally, any enlisted member, or officer up to colonel, may receive the Air and Space Commendation Medal for referring five enlisted accessions applicants who depart for basic military training.

Stripes for Referrals allows Airman and Guardian recruits to be promoted up to E-2 by referring two enlisted accessions candidates, or to E-3 by referring four enlisted accessions candidates who join the Delayed Entry Program or Delayed Entry Training.

Applications must be submitted through the Aim High application to qualify for the Air and Space Achievement and Commendation Medals. All users must create an account and input needed information in the "Refer a Friend" portion of the app in order to receive credit for valid referrals.

In March, the Department of the Air Force launched a Barriers to Service Cross-Functional Team to exam-



Courtesy graphic

ine existing policies and procedures to ensure they reflect the service members needed for the future. The programs announced today are part of this initiative and serve as a cost-effective instrument for referring candidates and increasing enlistments throughout the Department of the Air Force.

More information on the STARR program can be found in DAFMAN 36-2806 and Stripes for Referrals in DAFMAN 36-2032.

To submit referrals via application:

- Download the Aim High Application on your mobile device
- Create an account using your full, first and last name, and your .mil email address
- Open the application and look for the three horizontal lines at the bottom right labeled, "more"
- Select "more" and scroll to the bottom, and select "Refer a Friend"

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Luke AFB, RSAF mark 30-year partnership

By Airman 1st Class
KATELYNN JACKSON

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The 425th Fighter Squadron celebrated 30 years of partnership between the U.S. Air Force and Republic of Singapore Air Force with a parade ceremony, April 25, 2023, at Luke AFB, Arizona.

Established in 1993, the 425th FS, also referred to as Peace Carvin II, is the longest operating overseas detachment for the RSAF.

Clocking in over 75,000 hours of flying time, the 425th FS participates in large force employment exercises that simulate challenging operational environments, such as the large combat training exercise Red Flag held annually at Nellis AFB, Nevada. This allows RSAF to enhance their airspace capabilities and operational readiness.

"The 425th FS trains daily on high-end tactical employment," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Hilby, 425th FS commander. "We have recently upgraded six of our F-16s, improving our combat capabilities and allowing us to train against more advanced threats."

The National Defense Strategy identifies the Indo-Pacific region as a priority theater. The Department of Defense regularly collaborates with partners in the Indo-Pacific region on training and resources.

"Though this training is conducted at the tactical level, the cumulative efforts over three decades have made a profound strategic impact for both Singapore and the U.S." said Hilby. "We have the shared goal to bolster peace and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The achievements of the 425th have been made possible by the countless men, women, and families of the 425th that have executed and supported the Peace Carvin II mission over the past 30 years."

Training missions that integrate Airmen with international partners contribute to Luke AFB's goal of training combat-ready Airmen that can cooperate in potential future exercises.

"I'd like to express our deep appreciation to the U.S. government and the U.S. Air Force for your wonderful support and partnership," said Heng Chee How, Republic of Singapore senior minister of state, during a speech at the parade ceremony.

Following his speech, How performed a ceremonial inspection of the 425th FS personnel and witnessed the unveiling of the memorial tail flashes on the RSAF F-16 Fighting Falcons.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Katelynn Jackson

Republic of Singapore Air Force Maj. Gen. Kelvin Khong, Republic of Singapore Chief of Air Force, addresses Singaporean and U.S. Air Force leadership during the RSAF Peace Carvin II 30th Anniversary celebration event, April 25, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. Peace Carvin II is the longest operating overseas detachment for the RSAF.

Both tails were completed over the course of four weeks by 12 members of the 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron's corrosion control team.

"This operation impacted us differently than our previous projects due to how big of an impact we were making on behalf of the U.S. and its relationship with Singapore," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Eric Olsen, 56th EMS non-commissioned officer in charge of corrosion control. "Applying these designs was the epitome of what the 30th anniversary stood for; a strong bilateral relationship between the two nations."

The event was also witnessed by key USAF and RSAF leadership, including U.S. Air Force International Affairs Deputy Under Secretary Kelli Seybolt, and Republic of Singapore Chief of Air Force Maj. Gen. Kelvin Khong.

The Singapore Armed Forces Central Band was in atten-

dance, performing at the parade and throughout the week of celebrations to commemorate the relationship between the USAF and the RSAF. These performances included one open to the local community and hosted in the city of Goodyear, Arizona, and a separate performance at Luke AFB for USAF and RSAF personnel.

"This is our way of thanking you," said Republic of Singapore Armed Forces ME4 Ignatius Wang, SAF Central Band director of music, during a performance at the base theatre. "Not only on behalf of the Singapore Air Force, but also on behalf of Singapore."

Celebrating 30 years of shared responsibility for training F-16 pilots and maintenance personnel, the 56th Fighter Wing is committed to sustaining and elevating the long-standing partnerships between Luke AFB and international partners.



Courtesy photo

Chaplain (Maj.) Adam Roe

by Chaplain (Maj.)
ADAM ROE

161st Air Refueling Wing

Understanding Our Oath: The Importance of Ethics in the Air Force

When we joined the United States Air Force, we implicitly agreed to uphold our core values: Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do. This pledge is more than mere words—it's a solemn commitment, and not living up to it can bring serious consequences.

"**Integrity first**" is the bedrock of our pledge. It insists on honesty, responsibility, and transparency in all that we do, whether in service or in personal life. Falling short of this value could lead to loss of trust from peers, superiors, and might even shake our self-confidence. To steer clear of this, we must regularly examine ourselves, asking: "Are my actions truly embodying honesty and responsibility?"

Chaplain's Corner ...

"**Service before self**" encourages us to put the needs of our mission and the larger community ahead of our personal interests. Overlooking this principle can harm team unity, decrease morale, and even put mission success at risk. Thus, we must consistently assess our intentions, asking ourselves: "Am I sincerely prioritizing the service's needs over my own?"

"**Excellence in all we do**" directs us to reach for the highest standards in all facets of our lives. Failing to meet this standard can lead to lackluster performance, stifling personal growth and the team's overall effectiveness. We must constantly question ourselves, "Am I doing my best, and where can I improve?"

These core values aren't just guidelines. They represent the commitments we made to the Air Force and our nation when we took our oaths. To uphold these commitments, these values should guide our ethical decision making and shape our daily conduct. If we fail

to align our actions with these values, we risk losing trust, ethical collapse, harm to team spirit, and undermining mission success.

We've all had our share of failures, and in my personal belief system, there is grace in every failure. However, grace doesn't imply there won't be consequences. Therefore, I urge you to reflect on whether your decisions and actions, both professionally and personally, resonate with the pledge you took when joining the United States Air Force.

If there's any aspect of your life where the answer is a resounding "no," it's time for change. Let's turn that "no" into a "yes." Remember, if you need assistance, the Chaplain Corps exists to help. We'll do all we can to help you fulfill the promise of integrity you made when you joined the United States Air Force.

For information about Luke AFB Chaplain Corps programs and events, "like" us on Facebook @ Luke AFB Chapel. Feeling like you need to talk? Give us a call: 623-856-6211 for confidential counseling.

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